

FINAL

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic Washington County Courthouse

and/or common

**2. Location**

street & number Public Square \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Salem \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ congressional district Ninth

state Indiana code 018 county Washington code 175

**3. Classification**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>	
____ district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	____ agriculture	____ museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	____ private	____ unoccupied	____ commercial	____ park
____ structure	____ both	____ work in progress	____ educational	____ private residence
____ site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	____ entertainment	____ religious
____ object	____ in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government	____ scientific
	____ being considered	____ yes: unrestricted	____ industrial	____ transportation
		____ no	____ military	____ other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Washington County

street & number Washington County Courthouse

city, town Salem \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ state Indiana

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Washington County Courthouse

street & number Public Square

city, town Salem \_\_\_\_\_ state Indiana

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title None has this property been determined eligible? \_\_\_\_ yes ☒ no

date \_\_\_\_\_ federal \_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_ county \_\_\_\_ local

depository for survey records

city, town \_\_\_\_\_ state

## 7. Description

### Condition

☐ excellent  
☒ good  
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated  
☐ ruins  
☐ unexposed

### Check one

☐ unaltered  
☒ altered

### Check one

☒ original site

☐ moved date \_\_\_\_\_

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Situated in the center of the Salem Public Square, the Washington County Courthouse is an expression of the Richardsonian Romanesque style. The limestone for the building was quarried one mile southwest of Salem, cut on the site, and laid in a coursed ashlar facing over brick bearing walls. The building stands two stories above a raised basement level, with wall dormers lighting the third floor attic area below the decked, hipped roof.

All four sides of the rectangular building are essentially the same, with three main sections: a slightly projecting central pavilion with a gabled wall dormer, flanked by squarish corner sections with crenelated parapets.

The surface of the building is rock-faced from the ground level to the top. This is interrupted between the basement and first floor by a dressed stone water table. Above the first floor windows are shallow dentils below a dressed stone band course. The dentil motif is seen again above the second story windows at the cornice level, this time sandwiched between two narrower band courses. Above the cornice level, a crenelated parapet finishes the corner sections, whereas the central pavilions feature parapeted, gable wall dormers, flanked by paired piers with spherical finials.

All windows in the building are round-arched, with movable doublehung sash, with the exception of three round, fixed windows that appear above the second story windows in the corner sections.

The main entrance on the south elevation is expressed by a projecting arcaded porch, five bays wide. The round arches rest on short columns, with massive Corinthian capitals. The one-story porch terminates in a balustrade with spherical finials topping the piers. A smaller, three-bay version of this porch appears on the north elevation. There are no entrances on the east and west elevations.

The symmetry of the main (south) facade is broken by a five-story clock tower which stands just left of the main entrance. The elements of the tower conform to those of the rest of the building, from the ground up to the cornice line. Here, the dentil trim and dressed stone band courses of the cornice are surmounted by a square third story, which features a band of five narrow round-arched windows. A string course forms the archivolt, and continues around the tower. This first level of the tower culminates in a crenelated parapet, with corner piers topped by spherical finials.

The next level of the tower is octagonal, and features clock faces on four of its sides. Alternating sides feature oval windows. This level terminates in an engaged balustrade with short, round piers that have conical caps. The uppermost level of the clock tower is round, with an open arcade. Inside is the bell, which was recast after it was damaged by lightning in 1934. The entire clock tower ensemble is crowned by a steep conical roof.

The interior features broad corridors and high ceilings. Floors in the basement corridor and first floor lobby are of stone, and iron balusters grace the stairs. Each room contains a fireplace and many of the original furnishings are still in use.

Clock faces are six feet in diameter. The clock mechanism, which survived the lightning damage in 1934, was built by E. Howard and Company, of Boston, and uses 350 pounds of crushed stone for its weights.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1886-88

**Builder/Architect** McDonald Bros., Louisville, Kentucky

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The Washington County Courthouse is architecturally significant as a well-preserved, fine example of the Richardsonian Romanesque style.

This style was used in several of the Indiana courthouses constructed about this time, among them the Blackford, Hancock, Starke, and Fulton County Courthouses. But the Washington County Courthouse appears to be the earliest among these, having been started during the lifetime of Richardson. The present courthouse was the third to be constructed on this site in the Public Square.

Since its construction nearly one hundred years ago, the Washington County Courthouse has served, continuously, as the center of political and governmental activity for Washington County.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Stevens, W.W., Centennial History of Washington County, Indiana; Bowling Co. Press, 1916;  
Unigraphic, Inc., 1967  
Original blueprints of Courthouse, Stevens Museum, Salem, Ind.  
The Republican Leader, Salem newspaper article; Salem the Center of a Prosperous Community,  
Unpublished MS's, Stevens Museum, Salem, Ind. June 7, 1929

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 200 x 200 feet - approximately 0.92 acre.

Quadrangle name Salem

Quadrangle scale 1 : 24,000

UMT References

A 

1	6	5	7	8	3	0	0	4	2	7	3	1	8	5
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Zone Easting Northing

B 

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Zone Easting Northing

C 

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D 

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H 

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**Verbal boundary description and justification** The nominated Courthouse is centered on the 200' x 200' Public Square. An 80' wide street circles the Square, (as shown in original plat of Salem). It is intersected N. & S. by Hwy. 135, and E. and W. by Market Street. This nomination includes the Public Square, as indicated in the original plat of Salem.

**List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries**

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Judith C. Hedrick

organization Chamber of Commerce

organization Community Betterment Committee date June 22, 1979

street & number R. 3, Brookside telephone 812/883-5166

city or town Salem state Indiana 47167

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title State Historic Preservation Officer date April 22, 1980

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### UMT References

A 16 578300 4273185  
Zone Easting Northing

B                    
Zone Easting Northing

C                  

D                  

E                  

F                  

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State Historic Preservation Officer signature *Judith C. Hedrick*

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date April 22, 1980

For NCHS use only

herby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Director of the National Register

date

Attest:

Chief of Registration

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State Historic Preservation Officer signature *Joseph D. [Signature]*

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date April 22, 1980

*[Faint text]*

*[Faint text]*

*[Faint text]*

*[Faint text]*

*[Faint text]*



376111NW  
(SMEDLEY)

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

86°07'30"  
38°37'30"

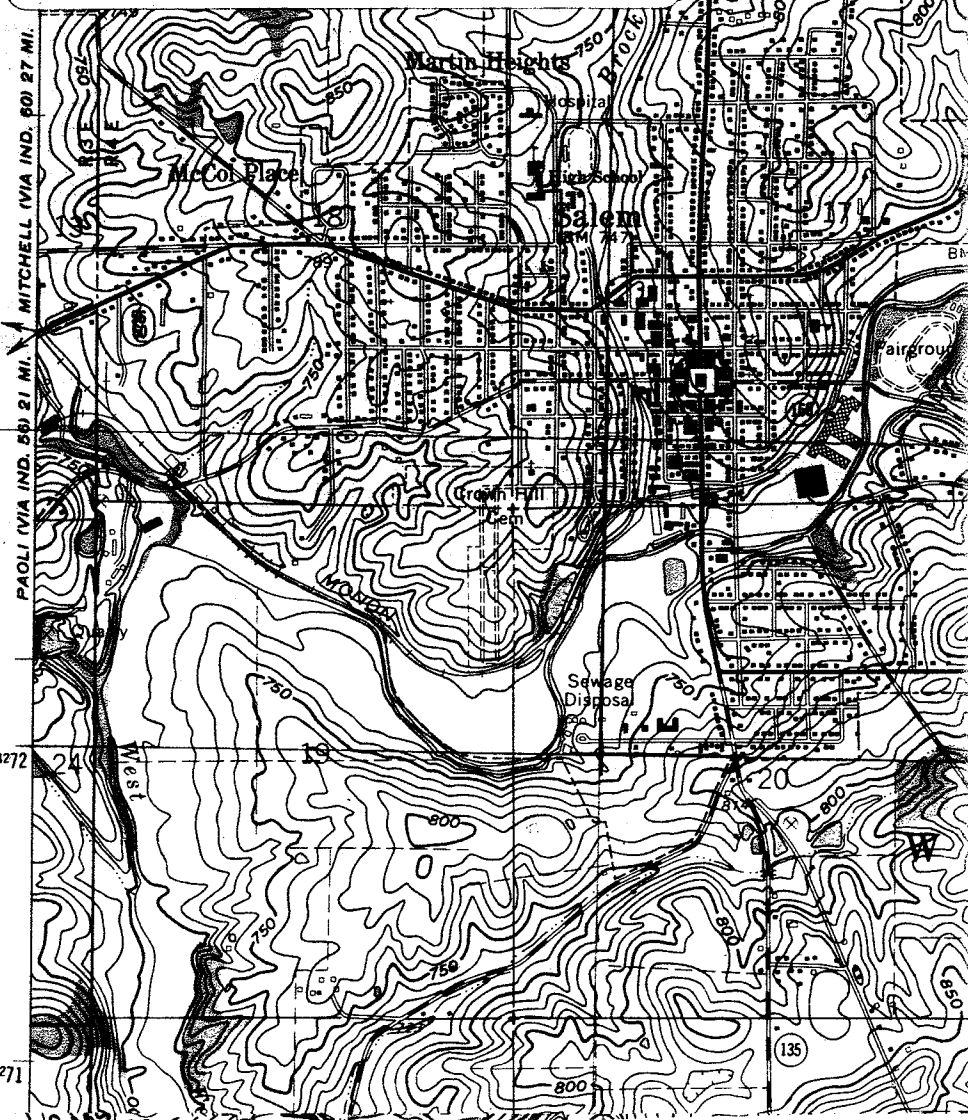
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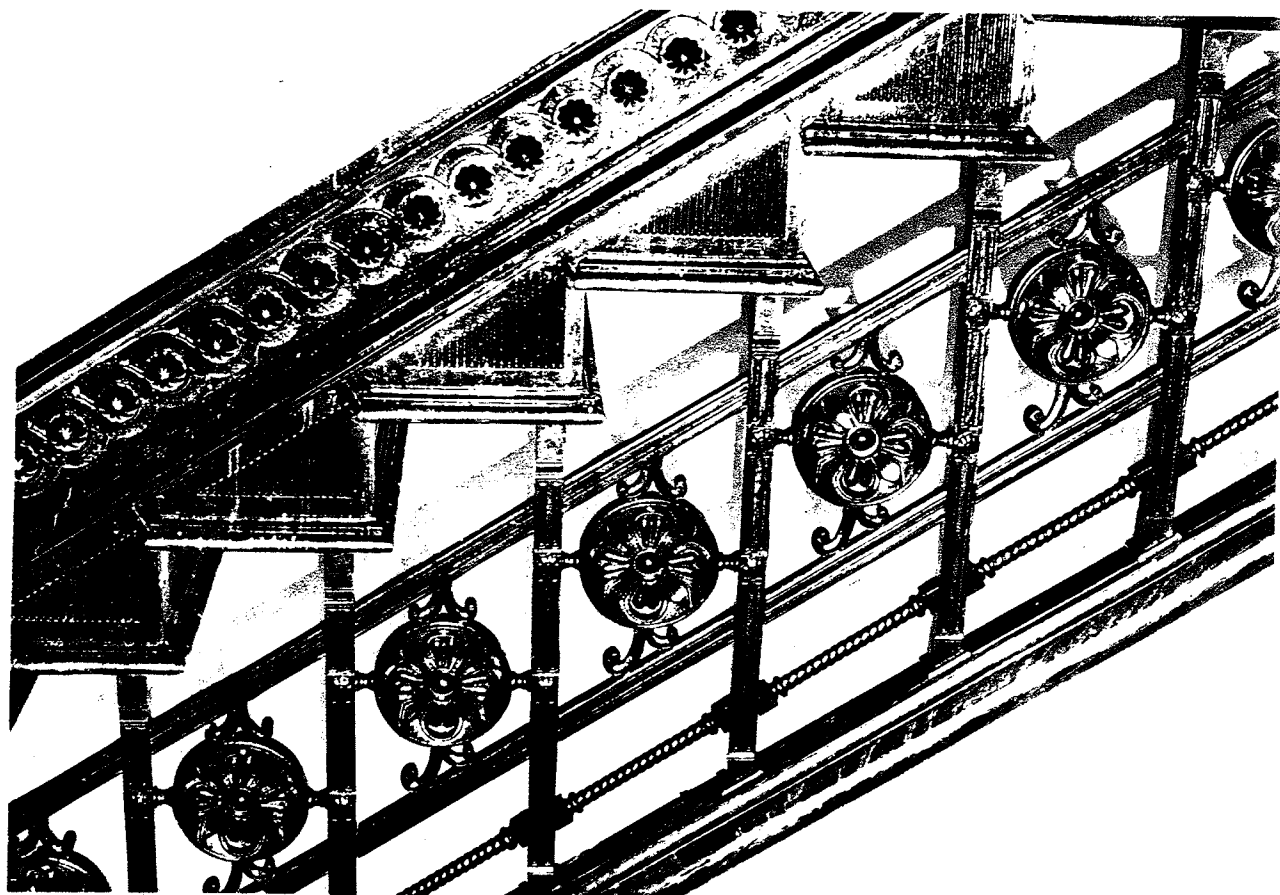
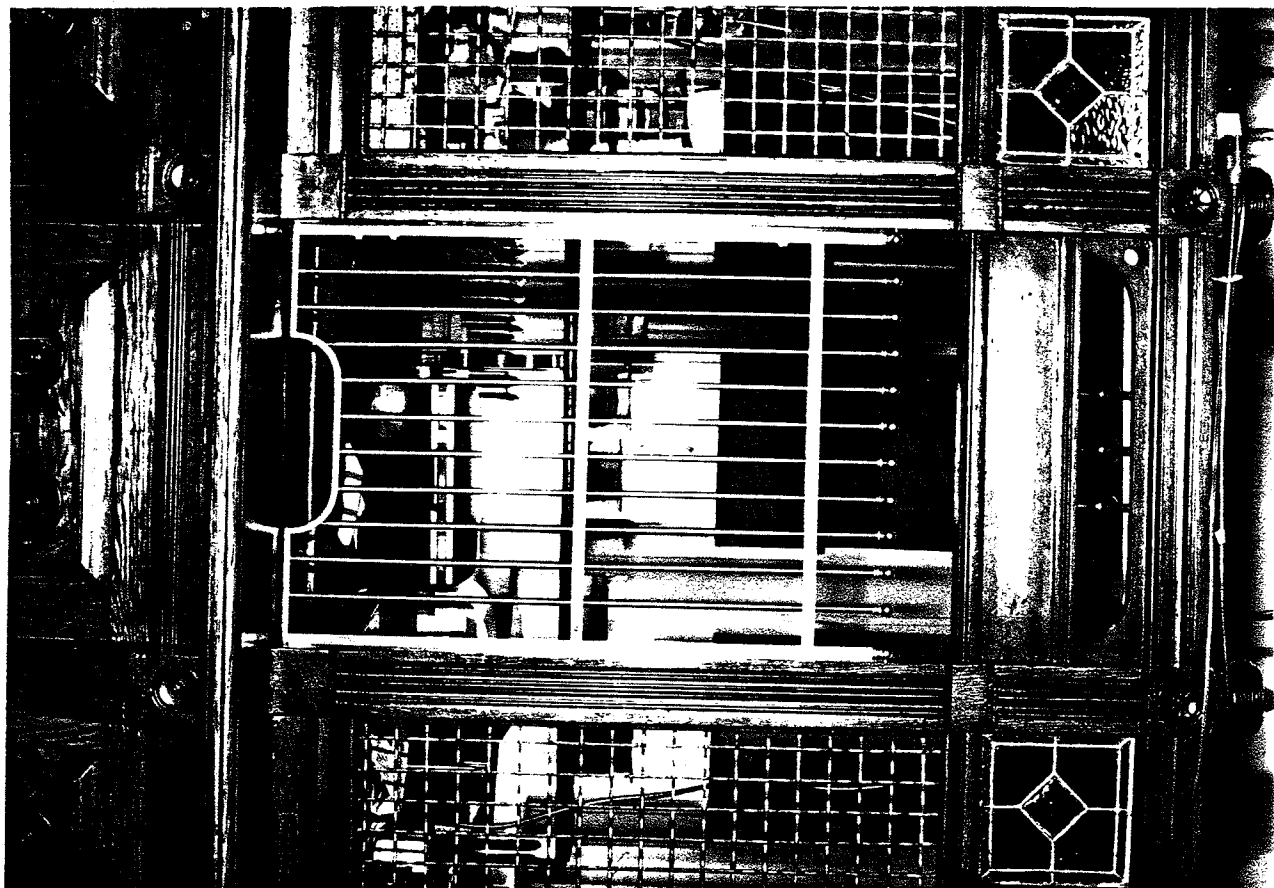
BROWNSTOWN (U.S. 50)  
KOSSUTH 6 MI.

4275000m.N.

Washington County Courthouse  
Salem, Indiana  
UTM Reference:  
16/578300/4273185







TOP

Washington County Courthouse  
Salem, Indiana  
Wm. V. Petrere 6-15-79  
Interior, iron stairway near lobby  
Photo # 4 of 4

④ Iron Stairway  
Lobby  
Washington Co. Court House, Salem, Indiana  
(6-15-79)

Washington County Courthouse  
Salem, Indiana  
Wm. V. Petrere 6-15-79  
Interior, Treasurer's Office  
Photo # 3 of 4

(6-15-79)  
#3 Treasurer's Office - W.C.C.H.  
Salem, Ind.



Washington County Courthouse  
Salem, Indiana  
Wm. V. Petrere 6-15-79  
View from southeast corner  
Photo # 2 of 4

② WASHINGTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
View from Southeast corner -6-15-79

Taken by William V. Petrere  
104 S. Main St.  
Salem, Ind. 47167





Washington County Courthouse  
Salem, Indiana  
Wm. V. Petrere 6-15-79  
View from northeast corner  
Photo # 1 of 4

(1)

WASHINGTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
View from Northeast Corner  
June 15, 1979

Taken by William V. Petrere  
104 S. Main St.  
Salem, Ind. 47167

